24. Educational Condition of the Ezhava Community.

MR. KUNJUKRISHNAN VAIDYAN (*Member, Nominated*) said that the Ezhava community forming 17·5 per cent. of the total population of the State and numerically as strong as the Nayars was educationally in a very backward condition in spite of its comparatively favourable economic condition due to the pursuit of agriculture and industries. Compared with other communities such as Brahmins, Nayars, Ampalavasis and Kaniyans, the percentage of literacy among Ezhavas was, as disclosed by the latest Census Report, very low. In regard to knowledge of English, the condition was even more deplorable. The number of Ezhava boys attending English Schools was not sufficiently high. One reason for the educational backwardness of the community was the fact of most of the educational institutions in the State having been inaccessible to them till a few years back. During the last decade the progress made by the community in the matter of literacy was lower than the average for the whole State. The poverty of the community was to a large extent responsible for more pupils not going in for higher education in English. Their comparative poverty would be evident from the paucity of voters from them for the Legislative Council. Government should therefore grant special fee concessions to pupils belonging to the community. The member had no objection to the benefit of such concessions being denied to children belonging to rich families. Fee concessions, granted generally to all members of the community as a result of repeated representations at successive sessions of the Assembly, had been reduced in scope as a result of certain discussions in the Legislative Council. Government should reconsider the whole question and extend the operation of the scheme.

The member also urged the need for greater representation of the community in the public service and on non-official public bodies.

DEWAN : The figures quoted by the member themselves show that literacy among Ezhavas in the vernacular is about 22 per cent. The strength of Ezhava students in all classes and grades of educational institutions is also increasing year after year. The difference in the number of students between the years 1098 and 1099 is 6,000. There is a similar increase from the year 1097 to 1098 also. In regard to vernacular education, there does not therefore seem to be any justification for extending any special concession to Ezhavas.

In regard to English education, no doubt the percentage of literacy among Ezhavas is less than one. That is why the Government have introduced a scheme of fee concessions there. The member imagines that this fee concession has been stopped. That is not the case. The benefit has been withheld only in the case of boys whose parents can afford to pay school fees ; and I believe a large number of Ezhava pupils are in receipt of this fee concession. The member himself agrees that he does not want the children of rich parents to be helped by any fee concession. There is no difference then between what he wants and what the Government have done. Government will be glad if the community will show further improvement in English and Vernacular education.

The House adjourned for lunch at 2-2 P. M. to meet again at 3 P. M.

25. Needs of the Nagercoil Municipality.

MR. V. S. RAMASWAMI (*Member, Municipal Council, Nagercoil*) requested that the weaving school at Nagercoil might be transferred to the control of the Municipality with a view to secure its more efficient administration. The axles, etc., reported to be kept for sale in the institution were not available ; sometimes *vizhutu* alone was available ; and if at any time both axle and *vizhutu* happened to be available, the Superintendent could not sell them as he had no instructions about the price fixed. It was to remedy the difficulties of weavers in getting those accessories from Bombay that the present arrangement had been sanctioned. The rent of the building in which the school was held was much too high ; a smaller building would amply suffice for the small class of five or six apprentices. The building itself, a tiled one and consequently hot inside, was unsuitable for a weaving factory. The establishment charges too were inordinately high and the present staff could well be reduced to

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